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INTRODUCTION

The Pre-Commissioning (PRECOM) training pipeline is long and will take many of us to various training commands and locations. As a result, PRECOM sailors will have an extensive travel claim to file as they report to the ship. This booklet explains the basics of travel entitlements and your responsibilities when traveling on official orders. Your understanding of this process will speed the liquidation of your travel claim by helping you avoid many of the most common travel pitfalls. This booklet will cover the following travel topics:

- Orders
- Endorsements
- Lodging Reservations
- Receipts
- Per Diem
- Mileage Allowances and Flat Rate Per Diem
- Family Member Travel
- Dislocation Allowance
- Temporary Lodging Expense
- Advances and Settlements
- Geographic Bachelor Travel
- Other Pay Entitlements
- Disbursing at the PCD
- Disbursing at the PCU
- Ship's Delivery & Travel Entitlements

For each topic, minimum guidelines are addressed. It is unlikely that any two travel claims will be alike; if you have questions contact the Personnel Office immediately. A few minutes spent now in understanding travel entitlements can save you time and possibly money later.

ORDERS

A word about your original orders ... protect them! They are the only readily available record of endorsements and advances made to you. If they are lost, the office settling your claim will have to contact all the disbursing offices and commands you may have been serviced by in order to verify endorsements and advances. This is a time-consuming task and will cause major delays in processing and paying your claim.

ENDORSEMENTS

One of the biggest problem areas in Pre-Commissioning (PRECOM) travel claims are the endorsements. An endorsement can be either a stamp or sticker on your orders, a written memo or a letter. Endorsements typically include:

- Reporting Date and Time
- Detaching Date and Time
- Advances/Partial Settlements
- Availability/Non-Availability of Government Quarters and Messes

Less common, but still required if applicable, is a local mileage authorization letter or orders endorsement for personnel who must commute if quarters are not available, or must use their personal vehicle on official business. This endorsement is not available in the immediate Norfolk/San Diego area.

The importance of obtaining endorsements cannot be overstated. For example, failure to have a certificate non-availability of quarters (CNA) endorsement for a member staying in a hotel will result in that member being

paid only as if they stayed in government quarters. As is the case with lost original orders, most of these endorsements can be obtained through message, phone calls, and faxes, but again, this is time consuming and will delay processing and payment of your claim. **The date and time of arrival at the BEQ/BOQ IS NOT an official endorsement for reporting purposes. You should obtain this endorsement from the Quarterdeck of the command/base that your PCS orders have directed you to.**

LODGING RESERVATIONS

When on temporary duty en route (TDY) or temporary additional duty (TAD) many members will be traveling by POV. Personnel reporting in a TDY status will not normally be able to make lodging reservations in advance. Most major training sites have rooms set aside in the BEQ/BOQ for personnel reporting in a TDY status. Personnel reporting TAD and traveling by POV will need to make all lodging reservations for the TAD site through SATO Travel at 1-800-576-9327. Otherwise, when traveling commercially, the PSD/SATO Travel Office that provides your tickets should make your reservations for you. If government quarters are available, a reservation will be booked as appropriate and a confirmation number provided. If adequate government quarters are not available then a certificate of non-availability (CNA) number will be recorded on the itinerary, and the SATO Travel Office will arrange for commercial lodging. **In the absence of a written Certificate of Non-Availability (CNA), government quarters and messing are considered available.**

RECEIPTS

Receipts also frequently cause confusion among travelers. The receipt requirements for travel claims are:

- ALL lodging and lodging related receipts (Ensure you have receipts covering your entire period/day by day). All lodging receipts **MUST** show a "Zero Balance". The best way to ensure that you obtain a "Zero Balance" receipt is to check-out at the front desk of the CBQ or hotel the day you depart.
- ALL transportation receipts (This is for long distance travel only, i.e. airline, bus, and rail tickets).
- ALL receipts for miscellaneous expenses of **\$75** or more (cabs, local bus, traveler's checks, baggage handling, bridge tolls, etc.). If in doubt about whether or not you need a receipt, get one! Keep in mind that ORIGINAL receipts are required. "Stationary store" receipts, copies, and credit card charge receipts are not acceptable.

In the event you lose your receipts, you should first make an attempt to get another copy of the lost receipt (faxed copies are acceptable). If this is impossible, a lost receipt statement must be completed. The statement requires your full name, address, and phone number, as well as dates and rates of the service provided. Remember, lost receipt statements will not be accepted if it is possible for you to still obtain a receipt. As with lost original orders and endorsements, obtaining this information and verifying it takes time. This time is money, your money, so don't lose your original receipts.

PER DIEM BASICS

The purpose of per diem is to offset the cost of lodging, meals, and incidental expenses incurred while performing travel duty or temporary duty away from the permanent duty station. **Per diem is not payable in the following instances:**

- While TAD/TDY in the area of the permanent duty station;
- While on TAD/TDY performed at a location to which the member commutes from permanent quarters;
- While on a period of leave or proceed time;
- While on "NO-COST" TAD orders;

- While TAD/TDY aboard a ship when both quarters and mess are available;
- While an inpatient in a hospital, and;
- While on a ship during acceptance trials when both quarters and mess are available.

These are the situations most likely to affect PRECOM sailors. Other situations of non-entitlement can be found in the Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR).

Per diem rates vary by locality and by the availability of Government quarters and mess. Proper endorsements are CRITICAL in order to be properly paid. Failure to obtain endorsements will cause problems in obtaining advances and can result in large over/under payments.

Per diem rates consist of two portions: a lodging portion, and a meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) portion. As stated previously, lodging rates vary widely by locality. However, M&IE rates are always between \$31 and \$51 per day, depending on the location. If government quarters/mess is available, your M&IE rate will drop to, \$11.10 per day. Only the host activity can approve locality per diem or proportional meal rate (PMR).

The maximum per diem rates for areas PRECOM sailors are likely to be on temporary duty follow:

LOCATION	EFF. DATE	LODGING	M&IE	TOTAL
Washington, DC	1 Oct 04	\$153	\$51	\$204
Dahlgren, VA	1 Oct 04	\$60	\$31	\$91
Norfolk, VA Area 4/1 to 5/31	1 Oct 04	\$101	\$43	\$144
Norfolk, VA Area 6/1 to 8/31	1 Oct 04	\$133	\$43	\$176
Norfolk, VA Area 9/1 to 3/31	1 Oct 04	\$67	\$43	\$110
*Wallops Island 7/1 to 8/31	1 Oct 04	\$93	\$39	\$132
*Wallops Island 9/1 to 6/30	1 Oct 04	\$71	\$39	\$110
Philadelphia, PA	1 Oct 04	\$116	\$51	\$167
St. Inigoes, MD	1 Oct 04	\$76	\$39	\$115
Newport, RI 5/1 to 10/31	1 Oct 04	\$154	\$47	\$201
Newport, RI 11/1 to 4/30	1 Oct 04	\$94	\$47	\$141
Bath, ME (Sagadahoc County) 7/1 to 10/31	1 Oct 04	\$98	\$43	\$141
Bath, ME (Sagadahoc County) 11/1 to 6/30	1 Oct 04	\$72	\$43	\$115
San Diego, CA	1 Oct 04	\$129	\$51	\$180
Jacksonville/Mayport, FL	1 Oct 04	\$78	\$39	\$117
Pascagoula, MS	1 Oct 04	\$60	\$31	\$91

Per Diem rates are subject to change and may be verified for various locations by going to the following link:

<http://www.dtic.mil/perdiem/pdrform.html>

* Wallops Island, VA is designated as an "Essential Unit Messing" activity in accordance with SECNAVINST 7220.66C. COMRATS will stop and no per diem for meals will be paid. The only per diem payable is lodging costs (usually government) and \$2.00 per day for incidental expenses.

Note that the lodging rates are the maximum allowed. If your cost is less, you are entitled to your cost only, as supported by original receipts. The M&IE rates are paid as stated, regardless of your actual costs. Receipts are NOT required for meals. Several reminders regarding lodging:

- Effective 1 January 2001, taxes on lodging costs are reimbursed as a separate reimbursable expense and are not considered to be part of the total lodging cost for per diem purposes.
- Lodging costs are not reimbursable when staying with friends or relatives, whether or not any payment is made;

- If sharing a room with another service member or Government employee, you will be reimbursed one half the double occupancy rate. If the person sharing the room is not a service member or Government employee, you will be allowed the single room rate. You are required to provide the single room rate as a receipt or statement from the lodging facility:
- Members on TDY or TAD who rent a furnished or unfurnished apartment, house, mobile home, travel trailer, etc., are authorized the following items when computing lodging costs:
 - a. rent of the apartment, house, mobile home, travel trailer, etc.;
 - b. rental charge for parking space for a mobile home, travel trailer, or camping vehicle;
 - c. charges for rent of appropriate and necessary furniture, such as stoves, refrigerators, chairs, tables, beds, sofas, televisions, and vacuum cleaners;
 - d. cost of connection, use, and disconnection of utilities including electricity, natural gas, water, fuel oil, and sewer charges;
 - e. dumping fees;
 - f. shower fees;
 - g. cost of maid fees and cleaning charges;
 - h. monthly telephone use fees (not including installation and long distance charges), and;
 - i. if ordinarily included in the price of a hotel or motel room in the area concerned, the costs of special user fees such as cable TV charges and plug in charges for automobile head bolt heaters.

NOTE: THE ABOVE ITEMS WILL BE PRORATED-TO A DAILY RATE. THIS TOTAL DAILY RATE IS LIMITED TO THE MAXIMUM LODGING RATE FOR THE LOCALITY.

MILEAGE ALLOWANCE AND FLAT RATE PER DIEM

Mileage Allowance In Lieu of Transportation Plus Flat Rate Per Diem (MALT Plus) is authorized for PCS travel between permanent duty stations via temporary duty stations by Privately Owned Vehicle (POV). This is not to be confused with local area travel, nor with regular per diem which was previously discussed.

Members are granted MALT at \$0.15 per mile for the entire authorized travel distance. Mileage between duty stations can be found in the "Official Table of Distances (OTD)" held by PSDs and shipboard administration and disbursing offices.

Flat rate per diem is \$91 per day and is payable for each day of authorized travel time. POV travel time is computed by dividing the mileage between the two duty stations by 350, and rounding up any remainder of 51 miles or more. For example, the official distance from Norfolk, VA to Bath, ME is 707 miles. The MALT Plus computation is:

Travel Time: $707/350 = 2$ days			
Flat Per Diem :	2 days @ \$91.00	=	\$182.00
MALT:	707 x \$0.15	=	<u>\$106.05</u>
	TOTAL DUE		\$288.05

Travel by commercial means (air, rail, bus) is reimbursed at a rate not to exceed the government's scheduled ticket cost, plus the M&IE (discussed earlier) portion of per diem prorated on a 75% daily basis.

Travel by air (INCONUS) is always one day travel time. Travel time for commercial surface transportation is calculated by dividing the official mileage by 40 to get the number of hours, then dividing the number of hours by 18, rounded up. Travel by a combination of modes is known as "mixed modes", and is an entirely different computation. Due to its complexity it won't be discussed here.

FAMILY MEMBER TRAVEL

Generally, family members are authorized reimbursement for travel from your last permanent duty station directly to your next permanent duty station. Travel to intermediate duty stations is not funded for family members. Remember, all family member travel entitlements are based on current Page 2 entries in your Service Record, so please be certain to keep it updated. Reimbursement is computed as follows:

- a. By POV:
 - (1) When Traveling with the Member: Each family member in the vehicle is authorized an additional \$0.02 per mile, not to exceed a total of \$0.05 per mile for the official distance. Flat Per Diem is authorized for each day of travel time at a rate of \$68.25 per day for each family member age 12 and over, and at \$45.50 per day for each family member under age 12.

If traveling in two vehicles, the driver of the second vehicle is entitled to \$0.15 per mile and \$0.02 per mile for each additional family member, not to exceed a total of \$0.20 per mile for the vehicle. Flat Rate Per Diem entitlements remain the same. Entitlement for any additional vehicles over two are under special circumstances only. Check with the personnel office if you have any questions about more than two vehicles.
 - (2) When NOT Traveling with the Member: If, for acceptable reasons, the family members must travel to the new duty station in advance of the member, after the member, or to another authorized location, they have a slightly different set of entitlements. Acceptable reasons include, but are not limited to, completion of school terms, sale of property, settlement of personal affairs, or shipment of household goods. Rates payable are identical to those in the previous paragraphs, with the exception of the driver. The driver will receive the full Flat Per Diem rate of \$91 per day, and \$0.15 per mile.
- b. By Commercial Transportation: Normally, a CTO/NAVPTO/SATO ticket is provided, otherwise, reimbursement is authorized for the ticket, not to exceed the Government's cost. Family members 12 and over are entitled to 75% of regular per diem and those under 12 are entitled to 50%. Travel time is computed in the same manner as the member's.
- c. By Mixed Modes: Like the member's mixed mode travel, it is rather complex, and won't be discussed here. If you have questions, ask your Personnel Office.

DISLOCATION ALLOWANCE

The purpose of Dislocation Allowance (DLA) is to partially reimburse a member for expenses incurred in relocating a household due to PCS orders. The amount payable is equal to two and one-half months Basic Allowance for Quarters (BAQ) for the applicable pay grade. DLA is authorized for all married members, but single members are eligible for DLA only if government quarters are not used at the new permanent duty station. Temporary assignment to government quarters for less than 60 days while searching for off-base quarters does not void the entitlement. This sixty day period can be extended by an additional sixty days by the Commanding Officer.

The link listed below lists Dislocation Allowance (DLA) rates currently in effect:
<http://www.dtic.mil/perdiem/dla.html>

TEMPORARY LODGING EXPENSE

Temporary Lodging Expense (TLE) is designed to help **partially** reimburse a member for temporary lodging obtained prior to detaching from the last permanent duty station and after reporting to the new permanent duty station. TLE is based on the cost of the lodging you procure, the local per diem rate, the number of family members staying in the room, and the availability of cooking facilities. The entitlement will not exceed \$180 per day. A maximum of 10 days is authorized for transfers within CONUS. As is the case with all lodging, ORIGINAL receipts are required.

ADVANCES AND SETTLEMENTS

An advance is an estimated payment of travel entitlements or per diem made before those entitlements are earned. The key word to remember is that it is an **ESTIMATE** of the amount expected to be earned. The amount actually earned could be more OR less than the advance so you must carefully track your advances. After arriving at the new permanent duty station, you must file a travel claim. This claim will cover all travel from the last permanent duty station to the new permanent duty station. Your actual entitlement will be computed based on your claim and supporting documents, and any advances paid will be deducted. Any remaining amount will be paid to you. Conversely, any negative amount is an overpayment and will be collected.

In effect, an advance is a "loan". This loan does not become a "grant" or entitlement until the travel is complete and the travel claim is filed. Failure to file a travel claim within 10 days of reporting PCS can result in collection of any advances paid.

As a rule, PCS allowances (MALT Plus, Flat Rate Per Diem, Family Members' Travel, and DLA) are advanced 100%, that is their full amounts. Regular Per Diem, however, is typically advanced at 80 percent of the estimated entitlement, in a maximum of 30 day increments. Advances for Temporary Lodging Expense (TLE) may be paid for the average number of days that a member would be entitled on their PCS orders.

Overpayments and shortages stem from many causes. Most frequent is failure to obtain necessary receipts, endorsements, or improper completion of the travel claim. Another significant but less common cause is drawing an advance for family members' travel and DLA, then not moving the family members. Recently, and a little bit closer to home, several members of the PRECOM units were substantially overpaid (>\$1000) due to being incorrectly advanced for TEMDU at Wallops Island. Please be aware that Wallops Island is a "mission-essential" messing activity and that COMRATS will stop and no per diem for meals will be paid. The only per diem payable is lodging costs and \$2.00 for incidental expenses. Also, any "No Cost" orders (usually house-hunting leave), underway time (on another ship), or leave periods reported on your travel claim will result in a loss of all per diem entitlements for those days.

Onboard Precomunit, the member will be interviewed in all cases of any potential overpayment to ensure all possible entitlements have been considered. All personnel found to be overpaid will be notified in writing by the Disbursing Officer. The letter will list options to resolve the overpayment, most likely a one time pay checkage.

GEOGRAPHIC BACHELOR TRAVEL

This travel is authorized for members separated from their family while PERMDU (Account Code 100 or 106) to the construction site. The entitlement allows for one round trip airline ticket between the construction site and either the homeport or the family member's residence as shown on the member's Page 2. Travel to any other location voids the entitlement. Either the geographic bachelor or the family member can travel. The trips are earned on or after the 31st day of PERMDU, and every 60th day after the 31st day. Also, reimbursement is not to exceed the government's cost for the ticket. As such, it is strongly recommended that you have the ticket issued, rather than purchase it on your own.

OTHER PAY ENTITLEMENTS

While not directly related to travel, the following entitlements are often affected during a PCS transfer:

Family Separation Housing (FSH): This entitlement was formerly known as Family Separation Allowance (FSA). Members ordered TEMDU or PERMDU at a location to which family member travel is not authorized may be entitled to FSA. For PRECOM this will most frequently occur for members TEMDU to the PRECOMDET in Norfolk/San Diego, or TEMDU to the PRECOMUNIT as family members are not authorized to TEMDU stations. The separation must be over 30 days, and the current rate is \$250 per month.

Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH): The rules governing this entitlement are actually fairly straightforward in PRECOM:

- a. While TEMDU: BAH is based on your last permanent duty station, regardless of the location of the TEMDU station or length of TEMDU.
- b. When PERMDU: BAH is based on the new permanent duty station rate.

NOTE: IN CASES, WHERE YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS RESIDE ELSEWHERE, THE COMMANDING OFFICER MAY OVERRIDE THESE RULES AND AUTHORIZE THE CURRENT BAH RATES FOR YOUR FAMILY MEMBER'S RESIDENCE.

- c. Career Sea Pay/Sea Duty Service Counter: Your Sea Duty Service Counter and Career Sea Pay will commence at Ship Delivery. Don't wait until the last minute to review your Leave and Earnings Statement (LES) Sea Duty Service Counter for accuracy.

DISBURSING AT THE PCD

At the detachment, your pay record will be maintained by PSD Norfolk/San Diego. They will hold your records in disbursing and will be your main point of contact for all disbursing issues while in Norfolk/San Diego.

If you are in a per diem status while in Norfolk/San Diego, you will fill out a per diem request form on a monthly basis. You will also need to get a lodging intent form from your lodging location. This form states that you intend to stay at the lodging location for the next month (or shorter period of time) and states the room rates for that time. Once you have your lodging intent and your per diem request you will turn them into the PRECOM Personnel Office.

When you are preparing to check out of the detachment you must notify PSD approximately two weeks in advance so that you can request travel advances and so they can prepare your records for checkout. Upon final checkout ensure that you obtain a final receipt from your place of lodging, and that you have picked up your service record, original orders and pay record from PSD.

DISBURSING AT THE PCU

Upon reporting to the PCU, your service record, original orders and pay records will be collected by the Personnel Office. Your service record will be maintained by the Personnel Office and your pay record by PSD. If you are assigned to the PCU as PERMDU the Personnel Office will help you with the final liquidation of your travel claim. Personnel who are assigned to the PCU as TEMDU will have their per diem account maintained by Precomunit's Disbursing Clerks and per diem will be paid on a 30 day basis.

SHIP'S DELIVERY & TRAVEL ENTITLEMENTS

Ship's Delivery is the cut-off date for all per diem entitlements. For TEMDU personnel assigned to the PRECOMUNIT, the TDY period ends upon delivery, and all travel is considered completed. At this point, the Disbursing Office will begin the long process of liquidating your travel claims. As delivery approaches we will be providing more information on how this will affect your pay. One point to remember is that TEMDU personnel are not entitled to travel from the construction site to the new homeport. This means that if you are TEMDU to the PRECOMUNIT you are not entitled to move your personal vehicle or baggage to homeport until delivery and you are reported onboard ship in account code 100. Keep this in mind as delivery and Sail Away approach.

CONCLUSION

Our goal is to ensure you receive the best possible service. While we can't promise that our explanations will always be the information you want to hear, we can assure you we will make it as accurate and as advantageous to your individual situation as current laws and regulations allow. This travel handbook is our interpretation of the regulations and is not to be considered as policy. If there is any discrepancy between this handbook and the

regulations, the regulations always take precedence. These disbursing regulations are current as of December 2003, but can change quickly with little notification, so it is always a good idea to check on your entitlements with your Disbursing/Personnel Office.

SUPERSEDES

This update supersedes Travel Handbook of October 2004.